



**PROTECTION & ADVOCACY PROJECT**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 1, 2023

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**P&A Innovative Workforce and Technology Project  
Seeks to Transform Human Services in North Dakota**

(Bismarck, ND) In recent years, North Dakota's human service delivery system has faced a formidable challenge – a workforce shortage that has made it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain essential staff that support individuals with disabilities. In response to these pressing issues, Protection and Advocacy, in partnership with key stakeholders, has launched an ambitious initiative, the Workforce and Technology Project.

The strains on North Dakota's human service delivery system have necessitated the exploration of creative ways to effectively deliver the essential supports and services to individuals with disabilities. P&A deems it is essential to integrate assistive technology into various settings to meet the needs of for individuals with disabilities in the face of a workforce crisis.

Protection and Advocacy, in collaboration with partners, will lead a dedicated task force to explore innovative technology practices and research funding mechanisms for the integration of technology into the State's service delivery system. Notable partners include ND Assistive, North Dakota DHHS personnel, the ND State Council on Developmental Disabilities, Development Homes, Inc., HIT, Inc. and ABLE, Inc. P&A will continue to include other stakeholders throughout the process.

The expected outcomes of this groundbreaking project are ambitious:

1. **Researching Technology-Based Practices:** The task force will explore technology-based practices that foster independence and reduce the reliance on caregiver support within the service delivery system.
2. **Pilot Projects:** Two willing service providers within the state will collaborate on establishing pilot projects that use technology to address the specific needs of individuals with disabilities.
3. **Pathways for Funding:** The project will explore and develop pathways for funding technology assessments, acquiring technology, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of technology use through Medicaid or the current waiver structure.

As P&A celebrates Assistive Technology Awareness Month during November, the agency believes the Workforce and Technology Project represents a significant opportunity to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities in North Dakota. By leveraging technology and fostering collaboration, this initiative aims to promote greater independence and self-sufficiency while addressing the critical challenges within the state's service delivery system.

P&A is the leading civil rights organization for people with disabilities in North Dakota. P&A is a federally mandated, independent state agency established in 1977 to advance the human and legal rights of people with disabilities. P&A's mission is to champion the equality and inclusion of people with disabilities where we live, work, and play.

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